

# How Benton Won Life's Battle

by JOSEPH W. FOLK  
FORMER GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI  
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OUTSIDE of Missouri the home of Thomas H. Benton, United States senator from 1821 to 1851, is known only to the student of history. Webster, Clay and Calhoun are familiar words everywhere, yet Benton secured in the United States senate longer than any of these, and was responsible for more sound legislation than all of them together. His name was never prominently connected with the presidency, yet he accomplished more for his country than have the majority of the presidents.

This remarkable man came into the world in 1782, six years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and departed in 1858, three years before the Civil war. Thus his life covered the formative epoch of a government by the people in the making, and ended just before the outbreak that shook the foundations of the republic and bathed the nation in blood. For many years he ignored the mutterings in the political sky and preferred to believe the talk of war between the states over the question of slavery mere idle chatter. When he realized that the sentiment of disunion was real he took an uncompromising stand in favor of the union and refused to alter his position or trim his sails to meet the breezes from Missouri that were blowing the other way. Though entering public life as an advocate of the admission of Missouri into the union unrestricted as to slavery, he left the public service in the evening of life because he would not consent to vote for the extension of slavery into territory that had before been free. He was a firm believer in the doctrine of state rights, which was, as he understood it, the right of the states to govern themselves as to all matters except those delegated to the federal government. His theory of the republic was an "indissoluble union of self-governing states"—a federated republic.

His education, that is the school part of it, was limited to the grammar schools and a short time in the University of North Carolina. In a larger sense he continued his studies until the day of his death, and was one of the best informed men of his time. While other statesmen were indulging in the dissipation common to that period among public men, he devoted his spare moments to investigation and study, and his knowledge of the details of public matters was vastly superior to that of any of his contemporaries.

Benton's high moral character was blighted by his pugnacious disposition. In his early days he was involved in many "affairs of honor" as duels were termed then. He had not been in St. Louis long when the most unfortunate event in his career occurred. In the trial of a law suit some trivial dispute arose between him and a young attorney named Charles Lucas, a highly esteemed and most estimable young man. Lucas won the case and Benton challenged him. Lucas declined the challenge at first, but Benton persisted and offered deliberate insults. Lucas then accepted. They fought a first duel and no one being injured a second meeting was insisted upon by both parties. In the second duel Lucas fell, mortally wounded. Before dying he took Benton's hand and forgave him, but Benton never forgave himself, and the shadow of this tragedy went with him through the years to his grave. The code-duello was resorted to in those days often for insignificant things, and every public man of consequence had figured in such an affair either as principal or second. This duel was fought the year after Benton arrived in St. Louis. Four years later the father of the lamented victim of the duelling custom was one of the unsuccessful candidates for senator against Benton.

**His Fight With "Old Hickory."**  
Benton, like Andrew Jackson, was of North Carolina birth, and, like Old Hickory, moved to Tennessee when a youth just entering upon manhood's estate. He became Jackson's friend while they both lived in Nashville and cooperated with Jackson in raising the brigade of militia which became the nucleus of the army that was to annihilate the British at New Orleans, and make January 8, 1815, a red-letter day in American annals. It was on Benton's advice that the brigade was formed and offered to the government by Jackson, and for a time he was on Jackson's staff. Their friendly relations were, however, interrupted by a disgraceful brawl. Jesse Benton, a brother of Thomas Benton, had fought a duel and Jackson had seconded the antagonist. An angry dispute arose, Benton espousing his brother's cause. Jackson struck Benton with a horsewhip, and in return was shot in the shoulder by Benton. Jackson carried Benton's bullet in his shoulder until the close of his presidential term, and the wound gave him some physical distress to the end of his days. The feeling between them ran high after this episode, not to subside until the hand of fate

was to bring them together again, one a senator from another state, and the other as a candidate for the presidency of the United States. A year or so after the fight Benton moved to St. Louis, where he opened a law office in connection with a newspaper of which he became editor. He became prominent at once in the discussion of public questions, and took a leading part in securing the admission of Missouri into the union. After a five years' residence in Missouri he was elected by the legislature one of the state's first two United States senators.

**Declined Money Profit from Public Service.**  
Immediately upon his election, with scrupulous regard for his official integrity, Benton called all of his clients to his office and told them that he could not further serve them, as there might be a conflict between their interest and the public welfare. For some of his clients he had litigation over land grants, and as senator he was in a position, through the enactment of laws, to make them and himself wealthy in the settlement of disputed titles. He refused even to recommend an attorney to them, lest this might embarrass him in his public duty. His idea of public office was that an official had no more right to use his public functions to aid personal friends or to advance his own fortune than he would have to put his hand into the public treasury and take money therefrom to pay a private debt. Through all his official career Benton was true to this ideal and was incorruptible and above reproach from any venal standpoint.

**Championed "Missouri Compromise."**  
Benton's career of constructive statesmanship was the greatest Missouri or the west has produced. He came upon the stage of public activity with the enactment of the Missouri compromise, which was largely his work. He left public life coincident with the repeal of that measure. Under this compromise Missouri was admitted into the Union (though it was some years later before the state was formally recognized) as a slave state, with the provision that no state created out of the Louisiana purchase, north of the southern boundary of Missouri, should be admitted with slavery. It hushed slavery agitation for a decade, and any attack upon it for a time was resisted by south as well as north. Benton was 39 years old when he took his seat and had lived exactly half the years given to him. Monroe was just beginning his second term as president, Calhoun was secretary of war, Henry Clay was speaker of the house of representatives. In the next presidential contest Benton supported Clay against Jackson, but ever after that he was Clay's political enemy and Jackson's warmest and strongest supporter.

**Father of Homestead Law.**  
To Benton more than any other man is due the fact that there is no frontier in the United States today. What was a wilderness west of the Rocky mountains fifty years ago is now settled by happy and prosperous men and women by reason of his effort in securing the enactment of the homestead law. Benton established the policy of selling public land at a maximum of \$1.25 an acre, giving preference to actual settlers and securing to settlers the right of preemption. This made settlement easy and streams of sturdy men and women began at once to move westward.

Benton looked into the future further than any other statesman of his time. In answer to the taunts that the western country, particularly Oregon, would never be anything more than a hunting ground, he prophesied that the time would come when there would be more people west of the Rockies than east. He advocated the construction of a military road to New Mexico, and was so earnest in his support of the idea of a transcontinental railroad that his enemies charged him with being mentally unbalanced on the subject, and even his friends feared he was too enthusiastic. In one of his first speeches he prophesied that the Pacific coast would soon become the door of Asia and advised sending ministers to China and Japan—a proposal at that time considered extremely humorous.

**Brought About Specie Payments.**  
It was through Benton's effort that specie payments were established and that all our money became based on gold and silver. So earnest was he in the demand for a specie basis that he was nicknamed "Old Bullion," of which he became very proud, and in his speeches often referred to himself by that term. He was at first inclined to favor a protective tariff system, but later strongly opposed protection merely for the sake of protection. He stated his position thus: "The fine effects of the tariff upon the prosperity of the west have been celebrated on this floor. With how much reason let facts respond and people judge. I do not think we are indebted to the high tariff for our fertile lands and navigable rivers, and I am certain we are indebted to those blessings for the prosperity we enjoy." While he opposed the protective system he voted



for a protective duty on lead, which was largely produced in Missouri. In this he made the mistake that has been made by so many senators and congressmen of this day, who say they oppose protection, but vote for protection on the products of their own states, thereby placing themselves in the position of not being able to successfully question the justice of the demand of those in other states for a larger share of protection for themselves.

After the election of Andrew Jackson to the chief magistracy Benton became the right arm of that great president. In the attempted nullification of the tariff laws by South Carolina, Benton made effective Jackson's ultimatum to that state demanding submission to the law, by engineering the passage of a compromise tariff bill which stopped everybody from talking of fighting, but satisfied nobody.

**Fought United States Bank.**  
Jackson's greatest battle was against the United States bank, which he declared must either be put out of business or it would run the government. Benton led this fight in the senate. He brought up the question in 1821 by submitting a resolution to the effect that it was not expedient to re-charter the bank. The war against the bank raged fiercely for years. It had many powerful adherents and obtained the support of a number of members of congress, as was shown later by investigation, through what amounted to brazen bribery in the way of favoritism on loans. In the midst of the fight the presidential election of 1822 took place and Jackson was triumphantly re-elected. Shortly after this Jackson made an order withdrawing the public funds from the bank. This precipitated a tremendous public uproar and the senate adopted a resolution censuring Jackson for the act. Benton immediately began a fight to expunge this resolution from the record, and finally, in the last days of the Jackson administration, the motion prevailed amidst great excitement and the resolution of censure was expunged by having a black border drawn around it and across its face the words: "Expunged by order of the senate, January 18, 1837." Jackson deeply appreciated the value of Benton's support and years later, on his deathbed, said to a friend: "Tell Col. Benton I am grateful."

Benton was the supporter of Jackson's successors to the presidency, particularly of Van Buren and Polk, but after Andrew Jackson, the president up to the Civil war wielded little influence compared with those before, and were largely engaged in a game of hide-and-seek on the slavery question. In 1848 the anti-Bentonites carried a majority of the Missouri legislature,

and a resolution was passed demanding that slavery be permitted to exist in territory north of the Missouri compromise boundary and instructing the senators to vote accordingly. Benton denounced this resolution as treasonable and refused to obey it. He said it did not represent the sentiment of the people of the state and he appealed from the Missouri legislature to the Missouri people. The struggle was bitter and intense. As Benton was up for re-election, it being the close of his fifth term as senator, the effort was to control the legislature which was to elect the senator for the following term. Neither side obtained a majority of the members and a deadlock resulted to be broken by the anti-Benton Democrats combining with the Whigs and bringing about Benton's defeat.

The old warrior was not dismayed and kept up the fight. In 1832 he was sent to the lower house of congress from St. Louis as a Union Democrat. For thirty years he had been absolute dictator in the politics of Missouri. His word was final, and his wishes law, but the tide had turned, and for the remaining years of his life he steadily against him. Yet at no time in his career does Benton present a more inspiring figure than when, with his back to the wall, crowded on every side by foes, he continued to battle for the principles he believed in. By compromising and by truckling to the public he had regained his seat in the senate, but he would have lost the love and admiration due the brave man who prefers defeat with the right to victory with what he considers wrong.

Benton's mannerisms were marked and did not tend to make him popular with the masses. He seemed egotistical to the point of absurdity, yet in him it was merely exaggerated self-respect. To the casual observer stern and pompous, he was gentle and tender-hearted to those who knew him well. His public and private life were above reproach. His high sense of honor as a public servant, his incorruptible integrity, his unwavering adherence at whatever cost to the principles he believed in, his powerful intellect and his aggressive energy combined to make him a fighter eminently qualified to lead and represent the militant people of the West in the first half of the last century.

He was defeated for re-election to the house in 1854, and in 1856 became the candidate of the Union Democrats for governor, and ran third in the race. He was now 74 years old, but as vigorous and robust as ever. Without lamenting his fate or the people's ingratitude, he cheerfully took up the completion of his "Thirty Years' View," giving a mental picture of the important events in the history of our country with which he had been connected. In 1858 he died in Washington, undismayed by the storm of public misunderstanding that had wrecked his political life. He looked into

the future and saw the approval of coming generations whose views would not be obscured by the passions and excitement of the moment. When the news of his death reached Missouri there was an entire change of sentiment and all classes united to do honor to his memory. They then realized that the mightiest man of Missouri was dead, the man who towered above friends and foes. All the state was in mourning and his funeral at St. Louis was attended by more than forty thousand people.

**Saved Missouri to Union.**  
It was the fight Benton made that enabled others, when the war came, to keep Missouri in the Union. If Missouri had seceded there probably would have been a different story to tell than that which came from Appomattox.

So Benton won life's battle by simple honesty, by perseverance, by having ideals and remaining true to them in sunshine and in shadow. His influence will be felt for good as long as this republic lasts, and the failure to secure political preferment at the end of his life by giving up the fight accentuates the grandeur of his character. He lost for the moment, but in losing he gained for all time. For him there was victory in defeat. The lesson of his life is—it is not essential always to win, but it is essential to keep the faith.

**The Mystery of a Duel.**  
Having fought his duel and saved his honor by firing a shot in the air, the editor of a French provincial newspaper went back to his desk and the incident had quite left his mind when he felt something strange in his thigh. He looked and found that he was bleeding profusely.

A doctor was called, who discovered that a bullet was embedded in the editor's thigh some two inches deep and required extraction. "Why was this not taken notice of on the spot where the duel took place?" he asked. The editor was as much in the dark as the doctor. At the moment of the duel he had fired into the air and his adversary also took a distracted sort of aim. There had evidently been no intention of doing the slightest harm on either side. The editor felt nothing as he left the field and had shaken hands with his antagonist as a sign of reconciliation. How a bullet came to be lodged in his thigh was simply one of the mysteries of duelling.

**Another Boom for the Crops.**  
"Not many delegates appeared at the Esperantist congress that met in Kansas."  
"No. Most of them stopped off and hired out as harvest hands."

**Strategy.**  
Bessie—But didn't you say if George tried to kiss you, why, you wouldn't stand for it?  
Peggy—I didn't. I—I sat down in a hammock.

## A LITTLE TOO PRIMITIVE

Shower Bath Arrangement Something of a Shock to the Participant.

August Belmont, at a dinner in Saratoga, praised the seaside towns of New England.  
"But some of them," he added, "are a little too primitive. I remember a story about the primitive town of Rockford. Rockford had a rough bathing establishment, with a shower bath. You stood in your bathhouse and pulled a rope and a deluge of cool water descended from the ceiling."  
"Well, a lady visitor stood one day in her bathhouse, ready for the shower. She pulled the rope and braced herself, but no shower followed. She gave the rope another tug, when the gruff voice of the sailor proprietor of the establishment sounded from aloft.  
"Stand a pint more to hor-ast, mum," it said, "if ye want to get the full force."  
"And the horrified lady, looking up, saw the old sailor frowning impatiently through a hole in the ceiling and tilting a barrel of sea water for the shower."

## TO SAVE TIME.



Algy Weaking—Miss Wise, I saw that is—Gladys, I—er—desire to—aw! really—  
Gladys Wise—Keep right on; I'll consider your proposal and have my answer ready by the time you have gotten it out of your system.

## WASTED A FORTUNE ON SKIN TROUBLE

"I began to have an itching over my whole body about seven years ago and this settled in my limbs, from the knee to the toes. I went to see a great many physicians, a matter which cost me a fortune, and after I noticed that I did not get any relief that way, I went for three years to the hospital. But I used all the medicines that I could see but became worse and worse. I had an inflammation which made me almost crazy with pain. When I showed my foot to my friends they would get really frightened. I did not know what to do. I was so sick and had become so nervous that I positively lost all hope.

"I had seen the advertisement of the Cuticura Remedies a great many times, but could not make up my mind to buy them, for I had already used so many medicines. Finally I did decide to use the Cuticura Remedies and I tell you that I was never so pleased as when I noticed that, after having used two sets of Cuticura Soap, Cuticura Ointment and Cuticura Pills, the entire inflammation had gone. I was completely cured. I should be only too glad if people with similar disease would come to me and find out the truth. I would only recommend them to use Cuticura. Mrs. Bertha Sachs, 1621 Second Ave., New York, N. Y., Aug. 20, 1908."

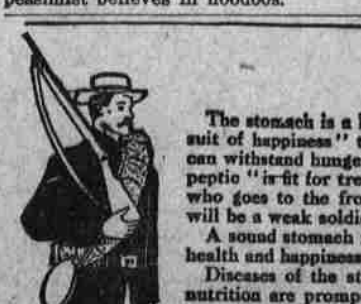
"Mrs. Bertha Sachs is my sister-in-law and I know well how she suffered and was cured by Cuticura Remedies after many other treatments failed. Morris Sachs, 321 E. 89th St., New York, N. Y., Secretary of Deutsch-Ostrower Unt-Verein, Kemptner Hebrew Benevolent Society, etc."

**Simple Expedient.**  
An American student at a German university tells of a professor, who was reading aloud in a classroom papers on a celebrated living German novelist, which had been written by the members of the class. After reading one he commented upon its excellence. "You show an exact comprehension of the matter," he said, addressing the student who had written the paper; "tell us what method you used." "Oh," replied the student, "I just wrote to X—, stating what I wanted to know, and that was what he sent back."

**Indefinite.**  
"I am positive this actress buys her puts."  
"Which ones—newspaper or hair-dresser's?"  
But the pure food laws do not make any provisions for love that is adulterated with filthy lucre.

Lewis' Single Binder gives a man what he wants, a rich, mellow-tasting cigar.

An optimist believes in maccois; a pessimist believes in hoodoos.



## INFLUENCE OF THE MOTHER

Well to Remember That She Is Ever a Model of Behavior to the Children.

It is hard for a young mother, who has not yet overcome the wayward tendencies of her own youthful nature, to realize the influence she exerts over her little one. She is constantly surrounded by critical imitators who copy her morals and manners.

As the mother is, so are her sons and daughters. If a family of children are blessed with an intelligent mother, who is dainty and refined in her manner, and does not consider it necessary to be one woman in the drawing room and an entirely different person in her everyday life, but who is a true mother and always a tender, charming woman, she will invariably see her habits of speech and perfect manners repeated in her children.

Great, rough men and noisy, busy boys will always tone down their voices and step quietly and try to be more mannerly when she stops to give them a kind word and a pleasant smile. For a true woman will never fail to say and do all the kind, pleasant things she can that will in any way help to lift up and cheer those whose lives are shaded with care and toil. The mother of today rules the world of tomorrow.

Cheerfulness should be the gift of the sunlight, the air should suffice for inspiration, and radiance of wisdom in the lonely waste of the pine woods, making us dance and run about happily like children.—Emerson.

A bad liver is sometimes the result of a good one.

## The Wretchedness of Constipation

Can quickly be overcome by CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

Purely vegetable—act surely and gently on the liver. Cures Bilemness, Headache, Dizziness, and Indigestion. They do their duty.

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A man is judged by his appearance

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Patriotism

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It builds up the body with sound flesh and solid muscle.

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A FLAVOR that is used the same as lemon or vanilla. It dissolves granulated sugar in water and adding a few drops of this syrup to any liquid makes a syrup better than maple. Maple is sold by grocers. Send no stamp for sample and recipe book. Crescent Mfg. Co., Seattle.

MAPLEINE

## BRIGHT SCENES IN FINLAND

Pleasant Change for Traveler After the Dreary Cities of European Russia.

This pleasant picture of Viborg, Finland, is from a recent book by Harry de Witte. "There are few countries as absolutely dissimilar (save climatically) as Russia proper and Finland. Everything is different, commencing with the currency, for rubles and kopecks have now disappeared to give

place to pennies and marks, the latter being equal to a French franc. The contrast is especially noticeable as regards towns and their inhabitants. Thus there are few cities in European Russia which do not appear dreary and depressing to a stranger. Moscow and Odessa are exceptions, for the first named is undoubtedly picturesque, while the gardens, boulevards and well-paved thoroughfares of the other present a striking contrast, to say the least, to the general impression of gloom and even squalor.

Viborg is barely eighty miles from Petersburg and yet I awaken today in another world in a cozy hotel bedroom. Its windows overlook a scene more suggestive of sunny Spain or Italy than the frozen north. "The picturesque town nestling against a background of pine forest and blue waters of the harbor sparkling under a cloudless sky, the wooded islets with their pretty villas, the ruined castle of Viborg, with its crumbling thirteenth-century battlements, and last but not least the general air

of life and animation are indeed pleasant to contemplate after the drab, dreary streets of the Russian capital. Viborg is, perhaps, the least imposing of all Finnish towns, for many of its dwellings are built of wood, which, however, is generally stained a dark red color, cleaner and more cheerful looking than rough, weather-beaten logs. "Pleasant also is it to saunter through the picturesque old streets, ransack the silver shops and come suddenly upon a market place lying in

the shadow of quaint old gabled houses, where the rosy-cheeked peasants, carts and cobbles and canbas boots packed with fruit and vegetables recall some old-world town in far away Brittany. Everything has a cleanly, bright appearance, and the fresh, pine-scented sea breeze is grateful indeed after muggy, inodorous Petersburg."

Now that the comet has not killed anybody, let us turn our attention to July 4.